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courage is contagious

Viewing cable 09CHENNAI144, BHARAT BALLOT 09: CASH FOR VOTES IN SOUTH INDIA

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cable's unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09CHENNAI144**.

| Reference ID | Created | Released | Classification | Origin |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 09CHENNAI144 | 2009-05-13 05:11 | 2011-08-30 01:44 | CONFIDENTIAL | Consulate Chennai |

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/the-india-cables/article1541302.ece>

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VZCZCXRO3824
OO RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDBU RUEHLH RUEHNEH RUEHPW
DE RUEHCG #0144/01 1330511
ZNY CCCCC ZZH ZDS NOT DELIVERED
O 130511Z MAY 09
FM AMCONSUL CHENNAI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2262
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0237
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0218
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA 0225
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0150
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0152
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHMFISS/HQ USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 CHENNAI 000144

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/13/2019
TAGS: PREL PGOV PHUM KDEM IN
SUBJECT: BHARAT BALLOT 09: CASH FOR VOTES IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI 00000144 001.2 OF 004
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Classified By: Acting Principal Officer J. Frederick Kaplan for reasons 1.4 (B, D)
Refs: A) Chennai 011 B) 2007 Chennai 337

1. (C) Summary: Bribes from political parties to voters, in the form of cash, goods, or services, are a regular feature of elections in South India.
2. (C) The subject of politicians bribing voters, with either cash or gifts, was a recurring theme in the course of covering the 2009 election. Poor voters expect cash.
3. (SBU) In visits to slums in Chennai and Hyderabad we learned that poor urban voters expect political parties to pay come election time.
4. (C) Rural voters also expect candidates to deliver goods in exchange for votes. Home Minister P. Chidambaram's son, Karti Chidambaram, who is a Member of Parliament admits to bribing constituents.
5. (C) Assaduddin Owaisi, a sitting Member of Parliament and leader of the Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (MIM) party, was surprisingly candid. CHENNAI 00000144 002 OF 004
6. (C) We asked Owaisi point blank whether it was against the law for him to pay for the well and the marriage. Owaisi laughed and said, "Carti Chidambaram's son runs for parliament."
7. (C) On a recent trip to Madurai in southern Tamil Nadu virtually every conversation centered on the parliamentary candidacy of M.K. Azhagiri. By-election sets the stage.
8. (C) After long relying on political muscle to enforce his will in Madurai, Azhagiri has added money to his arsenal and is using it to a degree that I get another morning paper?
9. (C) The Thirumangalam campaign that Azhagiri ran for the DMK was notable for how the money was distributed, in addition to the amount distributed. Applying Thirumangalam to a parliamentary race.
10. (C) Patturajan and others pointed out that the larger size of a parliamentary constituency makes it difficult to apply the Thirumangalam logic to vote-buying work?
11. (C) Although our interlocutors agreed that paying cash influences voter behavior, they disagreed on the extent to which it did. We considered

- ¶12. (C) Annamalai of The Hindu argued that many voters ""will still vote their conscience."" He said voters find the bribes ""insulting,"" a
- ¶13. (C) Karti Chidambaram said that bribes are useful but not necessary to political success. He said that bribes are one factor among many, Diminishing returns due to bribe inflation?

- ¶14. (C) The DMK's decision to field Azhagiri for the Madurai parliamentary seat has raised voter expectations. Congress's Kannan said that 1
CHENNAI 00000144 004.2 OF 004
bribes. But he remained optimistic, arguing that Azhagiri will still prevail by paying more money to more voters than his opponent, who is frc
Where's the money come from? Corruption and corporates...

- ¶15. (C) The money required to pay bribes comes from a variety of sources, primarily from the proceeds of corruption and from funds the partie
Cash for votes a way of political life

- ¶16. (C) Comment: Among the many factors -- personalities, alliances, caste, and religion, to name just a few -- that play out in Indian elec
KAPLAN